

An End to Selfishness

Elahav of Yoceph — I was just thinking about how easy it is to see the faults in the community, and in one another. Whether you see them on a small scale or a big scale, it's the same — you're focused on the faults. I was reading in Matthew 24 where our Master said, "They will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you and you will be hated by all nations for My name's sake. And many who will be offended will betray one another and will hate one another."

It stood out to me that we could betray one another. That's pretty serious. And it says, "Many false prophets will rise up and deceive many..." and, "Because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold."

Obviously that has happened in the world already, but this is talking about in the Community — that lawlessness will abound and the love of many will grow cold. If I focus on faults, there's no way I can endure until the end of the age, as verse 13 says. So I just want to be someone who is able to find solutions in the community, and have love to pour out until the end.

Shoshan told me once that the people who suffer the most in the Body are those with strong opinions. That's a major stumbling block for a lot of people who move in — that their covenant is to be loved and not to love. But really, when we're baptized, what we're saying is that I'm going to follow Yahshua and I'm going to love my brothers and sisters and pour out my life for them. I don't know what the solutions are, but I will start seeing if I love and forbear with my brothers. I'm thankful I can do that.

That's wonderful, amazingly good. You hit it right on the head. These "prophets" speak to us about all the wrongs, all the faults, and then they finally leave themselves. They see all the faults and then they leave — isn't that the worst thing you can do? Can you talk a little bit more about that?

Elahav of Yoceph — When I went back to California, Mevaser said that there were a few people who had fallen away, and all they said was how people had failed to love them. But the covenant is to love. You can't stand around tapping your foot, waiting to be loved. We'll be tapping our foot for 1,000 years. That's what the teaching about a good foundation says. We can't wait around for other people to love us. It's easy to say, "I don't have to submit to you because you're faulty." But really, we can't live this life if that is our philosophy. Our covenant is to love, not to be loved.

ha-êmeq — When we first lived in Chattanooga, we were trying to reach out to Christians, so once a week they had something called the “Christian Men’s Club,” but it was actually all the Christian ladies who were “on fire for the Lord.” They were so on fire that they didn’t just go to church on Sunday, but they wanted to have a luncheon together in the middle of the week. Someone would stand up and give her testimony about how wonderful it was to love the Lord, and it would encourage all the ladies.

One time they had a lot of children for their little meeting and they had to find someone to take care of them. Somehow they asked us at the *Vine House* to look after the children. (We went to churches at that time.) These “on fire” ladies came from different churches for this luncheon.

I thought, “That’s great; maybe something will happen with them.” So I told them we’d volunteer to watch the children and we wouldn’t even charge them. We went over there with our girls and they had a fancy room for us. The ladies would come in their fancy clothes and drop off their children. But this was one of the most terrifying things I ever did, because I came face to face with lots of spoiled children for the first time. It was horrible from the moment they got in there. The whole room was full of toys, and the children were hitting each other. They were so selfish, and so lawless. You couldn’t do anything with them except try to hold them, play with them, and cajole them for those two hours so they wouldn’t complain to their rich mamas when they came to pick them up.

We came face to face with selfish little people that we weren’t going to be able to change. That’s the society that’s grown up. One of the first things we had to tell a child was not to grab the ball away from another child, because a child will walk into a place and all he’ll want is everything. And if anyone else touches it, then you have a war because someone else is touching something that they want. And if they didn’t want it before the other child touched it, they’d want it really bad once someone else touched it. It touches their selfishness. So we would say, “You’re being so selfish!” And they would look at you really puzzled and say, “Selfish?” That’s a very hard concept for a two-year-old to get without the rod. They have to feel the pain of doing something wrong. That’s how at two years old our children learn that selfish is bad and they don’t want to be selfish.

But those Christian children were selfish and they were *going* to be selfish. They grow up without God. It’s a terrifying society to live in. So we resigned from that position because we saw that we couldn’t rule over society’s selfish children. After that, our people started getting married and having children, and then our Father spoke to us about the gospel of child

training. We understood that our Father planned from the time we were really young to start dealing with selfishness, because that's really the problem. Children are very selfish.

I'm so thankful He's revealed that to us. What would have happened if He hadn't told us about child training? We never planned on it, but He spoke to us and that set the course for us. We didn't have any children yet. Chets Barur was just coming along at that time. I'm just so thankful there's a solution. In that situation we were in, there was no solution. At least poor children have limits put on them because they don't have enough money to get everything they want, but rich children don't have that.

I'm so thankful that our Master gave us the plain gospel that puts an end to selfishness. Even if you were raised as an undisciplined person, as most of us older ones were, our Father's discipline comes upon us and it hurts us and changes us. And then we start to become nice children. I love being a disciple of Yahshua and changing to get rid of that selfishness.

That's what the Body is all about — to put an end to selfishness. That's what Acts 2:44 teaches us, to share all things, not to seek for anything first except the Kingdom. The end of selfishness is the end of Satan's reign, and the end of Satan's reign is the end of Death's reign. Death has to come to an end. The last enemy is Death. We have to conquer it before we can enter the Kingdom, or else we will suffer death ourselves.

All selfishness has to be put under our Master's feet. All of His enemies have to be put under His feet before He can return. We all have to do our job, by His grace, to put selfishness under His/our feet. Sin is selfishness, and that is an enemy. That's why we have to put it under our Master's feet (Heb 10:13). Selfishness separates togetherness. Selfishness divides, destroys, and causes wars. You've heard the term *self-serving*. It's serving your own interests ahead of others, disregarding the truth of the gospel which puts an end to selfishness.

As a matter of fact, you can't even be saved without sin being dealt with, knowing that it leads you to death. 2 Cor 5:15 says that since our Master died in our place, then those who are saved no longer live for themselves. They no longer live *by* themselves or *for* themselves, but for Him who died in their place. We have to understand that. If you

are saved you no longer live for yourself, but for Him who died. The old man has to be put to death. With some people, the old man keeps coming up and they get mad, they get offended, they start sulking, and things of that nature. That old man has somehow squirmed his way out of the grave. Maybe they're saved or maybe they're not saved. Where did the seed go? Did it go into the soil? Is it producing good fruit? Or do they get offended and finally leave?

There's only one kind of seed that's really saved, and that's the seed that goes into the ground and dies. That's what a seed has to do. The old man has to die and a new creation emerges out of that, as in 2 Cor 5:17. A new creature comes forth out of the dust. All things become new. We die, and the transformation comes as we're baptized into the Body. The Body works as a threshing floor for those who aren't truly sincere. They never put to death the old man.

We're not self seeking. We no longer seek after what we used to seek for in the world — our own things, our own advantage, pleasure or well being, disregarding others. This arises from self-concern, as one who makes excuses for himself (self justification), and self-love, having regard for one's own comfort, one's own happiness, or one's own advantage. That's self-love.

Selfness is an old word that means egotism, the state of being opinionated, conceited, holding on to one's own opinions. And then there's self partiality — it's the overestimate of one's self as compared to others. And then there's self-pity — being self-indulgent, dwelling on one's own sorrows or misfortunes. And then there's self pride. God opposes the proud. Just watch proud people and you'll see how our Father opposes them, if they're truly sincere, if they're really disciples. He'll oppose the proud, but give grace to the humble. You'll see the humble excel and the proud go down, eventually.

And then there's self-regard and self-reliance, trusting in one's own efforts, one's own judgment and ability. "I'm going to do this so I can make a name for myself." Or self-righteous, like the Pharisees. It's being convinced of one's own righteousness in

contrast with others. You see your own righteousness, but the faults of others. You strain out the gnat but swallow the camel. You major on the minor. You're narrow-minded and oppressive. Then you have self-seeking, advancing one's own end or interest, and self-serving, serving one's own interest in disregard of the truth. Then there's self-sufficient — "I'm all set." You're overconfident in your own work.

But what about self-surrender? That's the surrender of self in Mk 8:34-36. There have been maybe 1,000 in the last 30 years who didn't really surrender themselves. They came into the Body and were destroyers. Sooner or later they were sifted out on the threshing floor and they couldn't remain in the Body. But some will remain until the very end, and they will leave at that time and turn people in and betray one another (Mt 24:9-12). But those who endure through it all are the one's who are saved. We all have to be tested.

When He had called the people to Himself, with His disciples also, He said to them, Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it. For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? (Mk 8:34-36)

We're talking about the end to selfishness, and the only place you can come to the end of selfishness is in the Body of Messiah. You can't come to the end of selfishness on your own, out in the world, or even living an independent life in the Body. You come to the end of selfishness by serving *others*. That's what we're here for. The gifts are for others, not for you. The gifts that we have, the works prepared for us, are for the building up of the Body. Christians don't understand that.

Some people are self-willed, obstinate, not yielding to others or caring for their needs, but stubborn. They're willful, adhering to their own desires or ideas. We have to judge ourselves right or we'll be judged, according to 1 Cor 11:27-32. If we can't judge ourselves right, then where is the Holy Spirit? If we can't judge ourselves right, someone else has to help us judge ourselves. But the only way you can help judge others is if you

judge yourself first. *Egocentric* means being concerned with one's self rather than others — centered on yourself. Phil 2:2-4 puts an end to self-life, an end to egocentric behavior and attitudes, so that you can have the attitude of Messiah.

Make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. (Phil 2:2-4, NRS)

That's a command. So, what if we don't obey that command? There's no way Christians can obey that. It's an impossibility unless we live together, seeing each other's needs, living in our little cluster. We can't so easily see the needs of another cluster, but we can hear of their needs and see what we can do to help. Some came from Asheville to help here because they heard of our need for them. They aren't asking for any money. That's what love does. We can't be egocentric, concerned for ourselves rather than others. What about people who don't do Phil 2:2-4? Are they going to enter the Kingdom? No, they're going to go to death unless it's dealt with now in this life. They'd only corrupt the Kingdom. We can't be corruptors.

Some people, when they first come into the Body, are only takers. They have a suitcase full of all these things. We used to say in the Vine House days that people should keep their backpack on just in case someone offends them so they can leave — "I'm out of here!"

So Phil 2:5 is the end of egocentric behavior and attitudes. Our mind and our attitude has got to be the same as our Master's. Egoism is individual self-interest being the motive of one's conscious actions. First and foremost is what affects them. "I, me, mine." What affects me, not what affects my brothers. An egoist is an egocentric or egotistical person, a hedonist whose chief goal in life is to have his comfort in full, to fulfill his own interests and desires. Some day we will have a paper on hedonism.

What does Lk 6:24 actually mean? You get all your comfort now, and *none* for the rest of eternity — only torment. Hedonism is the pursuit of pleasure as a matter of

ethical principle; an ethical system that evaluates the pursuit of pleasure as the highest good. Can you learn that, so you can talk to people about hedonism? What is the sole or chief good in this life? That's what they strive to have for themselves.

Are you an egomaniac? It's being extremely self-motivated so as to bring glory to one's self. Christian preachers are seeking their own glory instead of seeking the glory of our Master. We can do the same thing. We have egomania ourselves if we're seeking our own glory, always talking about what we've done, or how many disciples we've made. Egoism is talking about yourself too much, having an inflated sense of self-importance. These are all aspects of selfishness that have to be dealt with in the Body, in this life *now*, before the end of death's reign will come.

Satan is the author of selfishness. He wanted something more than was given to him. He was envious and wanted to be like God. You see some people come in and they want to be an elder. They have a high regard for themselves. But Rom 12:3 says don't think too highly of yourself.

For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of yourself more highly than you ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, in accordance to the measure of faith and grace that God has given you. (Rom 12:3)

Someone on an ego trip behaves in a self-seeking manner, grabbing the spotlight, which enhances or satisfies his ego. *Ego* is one of the three divisions of the psyche, according to analytic theory. *Psyche* is the mind or the mental process. You can see the *psyche* at work in Pr 23:1-9 — “*For as a man thinks in his heart, so he is.*” If you have the right mind, attitude, or psyche, you'll take every thought captive (2 Cor 10:4-6). If we don't do this, then pretty soon we'll become like what we think.

Have you ever had thoughts coming to you continually? What do you do with them? You cast them out and pray, “Abba, I'm thinking this way, but it's not *me*! I don't want this thought to come into me.” You have to put your helmet on, your shield and your breastplate (Eph 6:13). If you entertain a thought, it will become yours, and you'll

become like what you think. It matters what one does, but what one does is usually what one thinks about. It's not so much what one does, but *how* he thinks, and what he thinks about. It's what he allows to come in.

So here in the Body of Messiah we're coming to an end of those things so that death can finally come to an end. Satan's reign has got to come to an end, and then death, the last enemy, comes to an end.

And above all, taking the shield of faith which with you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the evil one. (Eph 6:16)

That's the shield of being persuaded by the Holy Spirit. As a man thinks, so he shall be. It's according to your *psyche*. As one allows himself to think, eventually he will do it, speak it, or act it out. We have to have the same *psyche* as our Master.

For who has understood the mind of the Sovereign so as to instruct Him? But we have the mind of Messiah. (1 Cor 2:16)

We have the same *intent*, the same *concern*, the same *affection*, the same *understanding*, the same *will*, the same *intellect*, the same *thoughts* as our Master. That's where we're going. That's our goal, to which we'll attain if we judge what we think, what we allow to come into our *psyche*. Thoughts, affections, moral considerations, opinions — all these selfish ways in us have to be dealt with now, or they're going to be dealt with after our Master returns. We'll be judged according to what we did and how we did it (2 Cor 5:10).

Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Yahshua ha Mashiach has made me His own. Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Yahshua ha Mashiach. (Phil 3:12-14)

You can see that it's a course. There are a lot of stumbling blocks along the way. We don't want to be a stumbling block ourselves. In 2 Cor 5:8 it says, "We would rather be absent from the body and present with the Master." He isn't talking about his *body* being himself; he's talking about his *spirit and soul* as being himself. The body is only

what *houses* yourself, but we will have eternal bodies. If Paul were to die, he would have the confidence that he would be absent from his mortal body and present with our Master. Otherwise, he would go into death for a time.

It is the same for us. We want to be present with our Master. We want to be able to rule and reign with Him and participate in the resurrection (Rev 20:6). We don't want to go into death (verse 5) to pay for our sins (selfishness) that we didn't confess and forsake. So we're in a process. If you want to condemn yourself, you can. There is selfishness there, and it's got to be dealt with. If you think you're all set, you should consider all these *self* words and judge yourself right.

We have to have glory in our psyche. We can hear someone say something and get all riled up because we heard it a certain way. We're lacking glory because they didn't say it that way. Or, if he *did* say it that way, perhaps the person who said it didn't have any glory. It's not *what* you say, but *how* you say it. It's not *what* you hear, but *how* you hear it. You have to have the mind of Messiah. What are you supposed to do when you're standing in the minchah, if you have an offense against someone? What are you supposed to do? Either forgive him or *die* (sulk and so offend the Holy Spirit).

Whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive them, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses, but if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses. (Mk 11:25)

If you don't forgive, your sins pile up as high as heaven — a multitude of sins (Jms 5:20). If someone comes to you and shows you *your* fault, it'll save your soul from death. The multitude of sins is all the sins you commit after you fail to forgive your brother. No matter how many times you confess them, they're not forgiven because you haven't gone back to the sin that separated you from communion with Messiah. You have to go back and judge that, and then it will save you from the multitude of sins. Jms 5:20 — Let's be those kind of people, not coming down on them, condescending, but going to them in love and saving their soul from death.

Abraham — I'm so thankful we can be set free from selfishness by the gospel our Master Yahshua spoke. I'm so thankful our Father has had mercy on us. Not only did He create us in His image, but He's giving us a way to live in His image. He didn't just give us a standard, but He gave us a way to abide by that standard.

Nehemiah — I'm thankful for what we heard. The only way to really break out of being selfish is to have our eyes fixed on one another and on our Master. When we were reading all those ways to be selfish, I was thinking that every one of those things probably work in me. I could go along all day and say, "Okay, I don't want to have self-pity. I want to overcome that."

But I am still having my eyes on myself, and I'm not really overcoming. The only way to really overcome these things is to obey the gospel and live for others and not worry about how I look and how many selfish ways work in me. When one is pointed out, I can repent and get up and go back to laying down my life, keeping my eyes fixed on my brothers.

Sekel shel Nun — I was thinking about the verse that says, "You're a slave to whatever controls you." We come into the Body having been slaves to our own selfishness, and our only hope is that we would love the truth in humility, so we can hear what our Father speaks to us, so we can actually change and really learn to obey our Master. That's what causes us to be like Him. When we hear in our hearts and obey, it causes us to be like Him. So, rather than being a slave to selfishness, we become slaves to our Master, and we become like Him in the process. But if we don't love the truth, and we resist it, we're not going to change. I'm very thankful for what we heard.

Abraham shared about how when his child was very young, she started doing his will.

Abraham — I realized that it was an eternal choice, that if I chose to be faithful, then she would be faithful. It really excited me that she was able to obey my voice. I had no idea that a child that young could do that. She went to stick her finger in the fan, and my wife said, "Don't touch the fan." She touched it and I gave her a little spanking. And then she went to touch it again and I said, "Abigail, don't touch the fan." She looked at the fan and then at me and she started crying. I picked her up and I rejoiced that we had just entered into a life-long road of communication, where she was going to learn from me.

It's exactly the same thing that our Father wanted to bring about in us — to obey Him and do His will. Our Master said that in Mk 3:31-35. It's one of the greatest things He spoke for us to know and understand what we are to do here, in this age, right now. Otherwise, we don't have eternal life. Even when He was twelve years old, our Master knew He had to be about His Father's business. Just before He died, He said, "It is finished." He had done His Father's will. Otherwise, where would we be today? We'd be eaten up with selfishness.

We teach people to understand this who don't know our Master. The reason we're here in this environment is to bring an end to selfishness. If we don't, we'll have to pay eternally for our selfishness, just like the rich man who died and went to a place of torment, as our Master said in Lk 16:23,28. He was selfish, but Lazarus wasn't, so in death he went to Abraham's bosom and was comforted. He knew he would come out of there someday. Everyone has to pay for his own sins and will suffer torment to a certain degree, but the rich man had to pay eternally. He is still paying for it. In the Eighth Day, he'll still continue to pay for it.

We're thankful to be delivered from selfishness. We're not here to make money when the *Yellow Deli* opens; we're here to make disciples who put an end to selfishness.